(a) whether India's merchandise exports to the US have registered a robust growth of 27.51 per cent during the fiscal year 2002-03 as against a negative 8.51 per cent growth in exports during the fiscal year 2001-02;

(b) if so, whether imports from US have also gone up;

(c) if so, the efforts being made to improve both the import and export positions from India to USA; and

(d) whether Government are confident that exports to US would be increased during 2003-04?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI CHENNAMANENI VIDYASAGAR RAO): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Export promotion is a continuous and an ongoing process and sustained efforts are made by the Government through participation in major trade fairs and specific trade promotion events, apart from streamlining the information data-base to respond to trade enquiries in a timely and effective manner. Special emphasis is given to developing new and fast growing areas such as information technology.

(d) Yes, Sir.

Trade agreement with Myanmar

2724. SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether any trade agreement has recently been signed with Myanmar;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the level of trade with Myanmar at present indicating the quantity and value of commodities exported to and imported from that country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI CHENNAMANENI VIDYASAGAR RAO): (a) and (b) A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the establishment of Joint Trade Committee (JTC) between the Government of India and the Government of Union of Myanmar was signed at Yangon on 14th July, 2003 during the visit of Commerce and Industry Minister. The salient features of the JTC

are to hold consultations, exchange information on trade, review the development of trade, identify areas of mutual interest, recommend measures aimed at the expansion and diversification of trade.

(c) The volume of trade between India and Myanmar during the year 2002-03 was of the order of US$ 411 million. Quantity-wise data is not available. Value-wise data for major trade commodities for the period 2002-03 is as follows :–

Export to Myanmar

(Value in US$ million)

Sl. No.	Commodity	Value
1.	Primary & semi-finished iron and steel	14.72
2.	Drugs, pharmaceuticals & fine chemicals	12.85
3.	Machinery & instruments	8.08

Import from Myanmar

Sl. No.	Commodity	Value
1.	Pulses	201.40
2.	Wood & wood products	92.04
3.	Other commodities	35.57

Transit business through Bangladesh

2725. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether talks are on with the Government of Bangladesh to introduce transit business and passage of goods from the North Eastern States to the other parts of the country through Bangladesh;

(b) whether people of Tripura would be allowed to go to Kolkata through Bangladesh on transit visa; and

(c) if so, by when?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI CHENNAMANENI VIDYASAGAR RAO): (a) In terms of Article VIII of the Trade Agreement between India and Bangladesh, the